

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 16 to 23, 30, 31, 36, 37, 39, 40, 42 and 43 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An authentication method in a print process that requires ~~user~~ authentication, wherein said print process is executed by a printer driver, said method comprising the steps of:

obtaining, from electronic data for which an instruction to print has been issued, information identifying an application which ~~has issued an~~ the instruction to print ~~the electronic data, of a print object~~ wherein said information is obtained by using an application interface (API) called by the printer driver; [[and]]

executing ~~user~~ an authentication request for approving ~~or accounting for~~ an output process of the electronic data based on the information identifying the application; and

controlling the print process so as to permit execution of image processing using the printer driver and the output process in response to a success of the authentication, or to deny execution of image processing using the printer driver in response to a failure of the authentication.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a step of extracting attribute information including the information identifying the application from the electronic data ~~of the print object~~, and

wherein the attribute information contains various kinds of document attribute information including at least one of a document name, application name, document creator/updater, affiliation of the document creator/updater, password, create/update date, which are associated with a document print process.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of executing, when ~~user~~ authentication has succeeded and a print process is executed, an accounting process of expendables associated with the document print process for each user or each department of a group to which a ~~the~~ user belongs.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein the attribute information contains various kinds of application attribute information including at least one of an application name, application user, affiliation of the application user, password, use date, which are associated with the application used.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of executing, when ~~user~~ authentication has succeeded and a print process is executed, an accounting process associated with use of the application for each user or each department of a group to which a ~~the~~ user belongs.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 2, wherein ~~user~~ authentication is executed by comparing an ID and password found based on the attribute information, and an ID and password that a user inputs to a printer.

7. (Currently Amended) An authentication system in a print process that requires ~~user~~ authentication, wherein said print process is executed by a printer driver, said system comprising:

~~means of~~ for obtaining, from electronic data for which an instruction to print has been issued, information identifying an application which has issued an the instruction to print the electronic data, of a print object wherein said information is obtained using an application interface (API) called by the printer driver; [[and]]

~~means of~~ for executing ~~user an~~ authentication ~~request~~ for approving an output process of the electronic data ~~or accounting~~ based on the information identifying the application; and

means for controlling the print process so as to permit execution of image processing using the printer driver and the output process in response to a success of authentication, or to deny execution of image processing using the printer driver in response to a failure of the authentication.

8. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 7, further comprising means ~~of~~ for extracting attribute information including the information identifying the application from the electronic data ~~of the print object~~, and

wherein the attribute information contains various kinds of document attribute information including at least one of a document name, application name, document creator/updater, affiliation of the document creator/updater, password, create/update date, which are associated with a document print process.

9. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 8, wherein said authentication system comprises a client computer or print server which is installed with a printer driver, a server for managing a network, and a printer for executing the print process, which are connected via a network, and

said obtaining means and extraction means are included in the printer driver, and said ~~user authentication~~ means for executing an authentication request is included in the server.

10. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 8, further comprising means ~~of~~ for, when ~~user~~ authentication has succeeded and a print process is executed, executing an accounting process of expendables associated with the document print process for each user or each department of a group to which a ~~the~~ user belongs.

11. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 8, wherein the attribute information contains various kinds of application attribute information including at least one of an application name, application user, affiliation of the application user, password, use date, which are associated with the application used.

12. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 7, further comprising means of for, when ~~user~~ authentication has succeeded and a print process is executed, executing an accounting process associated with use of the application for each user or each department of a group to which ~~a~~ the user belongs.

13. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 8, wherein said authentication system comprises a client computer or print server which is installed with a printer driver, and a printer for executing the print process, which are connected via a network, and

said obtaining means and extraction means are included in the printer driver, and said ~~user authentication~~ means for executing an authentication request is included in the printer.

14. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 8, wherein said ~~user~~ authentication means compares an ID and password found based on the attribute information, and an ID and password that a user inputs to a printer.

15. (Currently Amended) A printer driver in an authentication system which executes a print process that requires ~~user~~ authentication, comprising:

a receiving step of receiving information obtained from electronic data for which an instruction to print has been issued, said information identifying an application which ~~has issued~~ the an instruction to print the electronic data ~~of a print object~~;

a selecting step of selecting information required for ~~user~~ authentication from the information identifying the application received in said receiving step;

a sending step of sending a ~~user~~ an authentication request appended with the selected information for approving the print process of the electronic data to a server via a network; and

a controlling step of, when ~~user~~ authentication has succeeded, controlling a printer to execute the print process using the electronic data, and of, when authentication has been denied, controlling so as to deny the print process of the electronic data.

16. to 26. (Cancelled).

27. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus communicating with an external information processing apparatus performing an ~~[[a]]~~ ~~user~~ authentication for a print process, comprising:

extracting means ~~of~~ for extracting, from electronic data for which an instruction to print has been issued, information identifying an application which ~~has~~ issued ~~an~~ the instruction to print the electronic data ~~of a print object;~~ and

output means ~~of~~ for outputting the information extracted by said extracting means to said external information processing apparatus in order to use the information for the ~~[[a]]~~ ~~user~~ authentication for the print process,

wherein said extracting means extracts the information identifying the application from the electronic data for which an instruction to print has been issued by

calling a printer driver module and an application interface (API) provided in the printer driver module, wherein said API is between the printer driver module and an operating system that operates the electronic data in said information processing apparatus.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said information further contains various kind of document attribute information including at least one of a document name, document creator, application of the document creator, create date which are associated with a document print process.

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said information further contains an application name indicating an application to be used.

30. and 31. (Cancelled).

32. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim ~~[[30]]~~ 27, wherein said extracting means calls said API in response to a print instruction inputted from the application.

33. (Currently Amended) A ~~user~~ authentication method of an information processing apparatus communicating with an external information processing apparatus performing an ~~[[a]]~~ ~~user~~ authentication for a print process, comprising:

an extracting step of extracting from electronic data for which an instruction to print has been issued, information identifying an application which has issued the an instruction to print the electronic data of a print object; and

an output step of outputting the information extracted by said extracting step to said external information processing apparatus in order to use the information for the ~~[[a]] user~~ authentication for the print process,

wherein in said extracting step, the information identifying the application from the electronic data instructed to be printed is extracted by calling a printer driver module and an application interface (API) provided in the printer driver module, wherein said API is between the printer driver module and an operating system that operates the electronic data in said information processing apparatus.

34. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 33, wherein said information further contains various kind of document attribute information including at least one of a document name, document creator, application of the document creator, create date which are associated with a document print process.

35. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 33, wherein said information further contains an application name indicating an application to be used.

36. and 37. (Cancelled)



38. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~[[36]]~~ 33, wherein in said extracting step, said API is called in response to a print instruction inputted from the application.

39. and 40. (Cancelled)

41. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing a computer-executable program for performing the ~~user~~ authentication method according to claim 33.

42. and 43. (Cancelled)